

called on to ratify this treaty, this expansion of the NATO alliance. We will be called on to ratify it, and I think our constituents—the American people—have every right to expect that we will be asking these questions and that President Clinton, or President Dole, or whoever is President, when this decision is made will have asked and have a projection of the answers to these kinds of questions.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. COATS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMS). The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I wanted to just talk for a moment or two about the amendment of the distinguished Senator from Georgia dealing with NATO expansion.

Obviously, the immediate step that both NATO and the United States and Central Europe have talked about is the potential of the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary jointly. There are other countries that wish to join as well, and in time they will be evaluated and pass the standards that have already been developed.

While this amendment is put in the framework of asking a whole series of new studies, I compare it to the old-style Mississippi literacy test because it is this Senator's belief that they are designed to have the same effect. That is to take on the pretense of a study or ascertaining a fact, but in reality to simply flatly prohibit anyone from ever entering.

I understand that is not the intent of the Senator from Georgia, and I do not mean to attribute that intent to him, but that is my belief of its impact.

I wanted to deal specifically with one of the issues raised, and that is the cost. The amendment discusses a study done by the Congressional Budget Office as to what it might cost to defend Central Europe. Mr. President, the question is not the cost of defending Central Europe in the event of a military conflict. With all due respect, it is the difference in cost of defending Central Europe if they are part of NATO and if they are not part of NATO.

You do not have to have a CPA to figure out this question. If 400,000 Polish troops are on your side instead of opposed to you, does it cost more to defend Central Europe or does it cost less? That is why I feel this the amendment is so ludicrous. Of course it is better to have 400,000 Polish troops on your side than opposed to you. Of course it is in your interest to have the Czech Republic on your side rather than opposed to you. Of course it is in

your interest to have Hungary on your side rather than opposed to you. Does a war cost less if they are on your side than if they are opposed to you? Of course it does. This is phrased in the terms of reference of the Congressional Budget Office—how much more does it cost to do it?

That is stupidity. I am not referring to individuals. I am referring to concept. The question is not what it costs to defend them. The question is, what does it cost if we do not defend Central Europe? To suggest that if you have more allies and more troops and more strength it is more costly to defend that than with less is not a serious question. To ask if it increases your cost to have a bigger enemy or a smaller enemy, I do not think is a serious question.

Now, what is the question? The question is basically this. Do we want to recognize a sphere of influence by Russia over the future fate and defense policies of Central Europe? That is the real question that we have to address. My sense is that if we are clear that they must be masters of their own destiny, or at least have that option, we put the question to rest. It would be solved. It would be decided. But if we leave it open, as has happened the last 4 years, then we invite people in countries that might want to control Central Europe to imagine that we would sit idly by and allow them to dictate their future.

Mr. President, if there is a lesson that comes out of World War II, it is that uncertainty as to your intentions can be devastating at times. But I hope we will debate that issue, because a sphere of influence is a reasonable debate. It is an important question. It may be there are those who think giving others a control, a sphere of influence over Central Europe is a wise policy that will placate them. That may well be. There is a case to be made there, a debate to be had. But to suggest it is less costly to have troops and allies based on the other side than our side I do not believe is a serious question.

I must say, Mr. President, there is a suggestion here that somehow we are going to be the ones to pay for the troops in Poland and pay for the troops in Hungary and pay for the troops in the Czech Republic. No one from those countries has suggested that. They have not asked for it. We have not volunteered it. I do not think it makes any sense, nor should it. But I do think it makes sense for them to be on our side and not opposed to us.

We have talked about sharing surplus material with them as we do with other countries around the world. But let me suggest that there is a real plus in the development of joint material with those countries. It helps develop a common bond, a bigger production base and more unity, and I think it is worth pursuing. So I hope we will discuss the issue and debate it and will move quickly on it. But I think it is a mis-

take for us to hold out a hand of friendship and then not answer their question when they ask to stand side by side with us. If we really want someone else to have a sphere of influence over them, we ought to be straightforward enough to say it. I think it would be a bad policy, but we ought to be straightforward about it. But year after year after year to say:

Oh yes, we want you as part of NATO but just not this year.

Well, when?

Well, maybe next year. Maybe the year after. We are certainly talking about the year after that.

These are smart people. They are not foolish. If we treat them that way they will understand what is happening to them and they will react. Is it in our interests to give the back of our hand to people who want to be our friends and allies, our comrades? I do not think so. But we ought, at least, to be straightforward.

If the question is recognized sphere of influence of other countries over them, we ought to at least face up to that. But if we think they should have an opportunity to be independent and free, and this country stood for that for a long, long time, and we think the addition of their forces standing side-by-side with ours would make that more likely to be realized, their freedom and long-term independence, then we ought to get on with it. We should not play games. A 2- or 3-year study on top of 4 or 5 years of study is not a way to decrease our problems.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MURKOWSKI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am not sure what our state of affairs is, but I wonder if I may speak as in morning business for 3 or 4 minutes.

Mr. NUNN. Yes, we are waiting on amendments. There is an amendment pending, a NATO amendment, my amendment, but it is temporarily laid aside so if anyone wants to bring a defense-related amendment in we would welcome it.

In the meantime, we will all be fascinated with the Senator's remarks.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I appreciate my friend from Georgia. I am sure he will be fascinated.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ENERGY POLICY CONSERVATION ACT EXTENSION

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to bring the attention of this body to a piece of legislation that is pending, S. 1888, the Energy Policy Conservation Act extension. I think my friend from Georgia will find it does have an application to the defense of our Nation, because this bill is very simple, and its immediate passage is extremely important to our Nation's

energy security as well as our Nation's national security.

The administration strongly supports the passage of this bill and the language is not controversial. However, as chairman of the Energy Committee, we have been trying to clear this for 2 weeks now. We continue to have, unfortunately, objections from our friends on the other side of the aisle, the Democrats. But I know it is not the content of S. 1888 that they are objecting to. So let me make the situation very clear. I appeal to my friend from Georgia, the manager of the bill, that the authorization for two vital energy security measures, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and the U.S. participation in the International Energy Agency are due to expire at the end of this month.

S. 1888 simply extends those two vital authorities through September, until a more comprehensive reauthorization bill can be enacted. So if we do not pass S. 1888 by the time we recess, the President will not have the authority to withdraw oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve if an energy emergency occurs in this country. Further, our Government will not have the authority to participate in International Energy Agency emergency actions in an international energy emergency.

It has been evident in the last few days, the significance of our dependence on Mideast oil, and the fact we are willing to have United States troops in Saudi Arabia to ensure that peace is maintained and that energy from that part of the world flows. Currently we are about 51.4 percent dependent on imported oil. It is estimated by the Department of Energy that by the year 2000, roughly 4 years from now, that will increase up to about 66 percent.

Here we are with our authority to operate the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in jeopardy. There will be no antitrust exemption available to our private oil companies to allow them to cooperate with the International Energy Agency and our Government to respond to the crisis. Although it appears to be an easy one for some to simply disregard these dangers, I again indicate that recent events have underscored exactly how precarious the Nation's energy security is. As I have indicated, the bombing in Saudi Arabia is further evidence of the instability of the region that we rely on to supply the oil that keeps the Nation moving.

As proven during the Persian Gulf war, the stabilizing effect of a Strategic Petroleum Reserve drawdown far outstrips the volume of oil sold. The simple fact that the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is available can have a calming influence on oil markets.

There are those, myself included, who were dismayed to some extent by a recent trend toward use the SPR as a piggy bank to pay for other programs. We will continue to debate the long-term prospects for the SPR in the future. In any case, we have already invested a large amount of taxpayer

money in the stockpiles. The oil is there, ready to dampen the effects of an energy emergency on our economy. However, if we do not ensure we have the authority to use the oil when it is needed, we will have thrown tax dollars away. So, as I stand here before you, I implore my colleagues to release the hold and allow this simple extension to take place in the interests of our national security and our national energy security. If we do not ensure that there is authority to use the oil when it is needed, it simply will be to no avail.

So, as I stated earlier, the content of this legislation is noncontroversial. I understand the Department of Energy has been strongly urging Members on the other side to remove their objection. It is clear the objection from a few Democratic Members has nothing to do with the substance of this bill. It is intended only to gain leverage on unrelated issues.

Some of my fellow Republican Senators have problems with other parts of EPCA that they would like to raise on the larger reauthorization legislation. However, they have acted in concert to agree to allow this bill to proceed without amendment simply because of the strategic significance of it.

So I think it is reckless, I think it is irresponsible to knowingly place our Nation's energy security at risk, to try to gain some small political advantage. American service men and women, as we have seen time and time again, have given their lives to ensure our Nation's energy security. We have seen that with the tragic bombing in Saudi Arabia the other day. Make no mistake about it, part of our presence there is to ensure the supply of oil for the Western World would continue uninterrupted. We fought a war over that. We tried to put Saddam Hussein in a cage. So I think it is shameful that today we would hold this legislation hostage to a political will.

I encourage my colleagues to allow the immediate passage of S. 1888. I think it certainly is germane to the defense matters we are discussing here on the floor tonight, because you cannot move military or defense capability if you do not have the oil availability. So I encourage my colleagues to address their attention to the fact that, unless we get this authority, SPR will simply be unable to be utilized if there is an emergency.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997

AMENDMENT NO. 4367

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. President, there has been a good deal of discussion this evening about the amendment offered by my colleague from Georgia, an amendment which I cosponsored. I know it has generated considerable

controversy because some have questioned the consequences of and even the motivation for such an amendment at this time. But I would just like to indicate that I think it is important that we try, as best we can, to return to a bipartisan approach to foreign policy.

I would include within foreign policy our defense policy as well. This is something that, when I came to the Senate in 1979, we assumed would be the policy of this body—at least to try to forge a bipartisan coalition that would support foreign policy initiatives and certainly our defense policy, knowing unless we are united, we can only cause confusion, certainly within the country, and confusion amongst our allies as well.

The issue of NATO expansion is not new. We have been talking about it for some time. Yet suddenly, by virtue of the submission of this amendment, some of my colleagues assumed there may be some political agenda, some hidden agenda on the part of my colleague from Georgia and the cosponsors that would have implications for our Presidential candidate.

Let me indicate from the very beginning, I favor the expansion of NATO. I also support the candidacy of Bob Dole. I hope he becomes our next President. I know that he feels very strongly that NATO should be expanded. I intend to lend whatever support I can to his candidacy, as I have indicated.

But I believe that before we make a decision on enlargement, which carry some fairly serious consequences, we ought to know a number of things. We ought to know what the implications are in terms of costs. We ought to know, at least get an assessment from our intelligence community, what the likely consequences would be for our allies and what the reaction will be in Russia, to the extent we can calculate it. Notwithstanding what the Russian reaction might be, we are likely to take the steps necessary to enlarge. But we should at least be aware of what our intelligence community can tell us about it so that we can make informed judgments.

It seems to me that is not asking too much. And perhaps it comes at a political time, but these are issues that we should raise in advance. We should not find ourselves coming in at the tail end of a decision where a President has made recommendations either to enlarge or not to enlarge, where NATO has gone on record in favor, and suddenly the President turns to the U.S. Senate and says, "Well, the decision has been made. NATO is in favor of the expansion. Now the Senate must go along." Ipso facto, we must approve because NATO has approved.

That, I think, would put this Senate in an untenable position—to have a President of the United States make a decision and then simply submit it to us for ratification without us having any prior input into the decision itself or any kind of prior analysis of the evidence that we ought to be considering.